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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000954

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/01/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: THIRD PRIME MINISTER CONFIRMATION PROCESS JUST  
GETTING UNDERWAY

REF: A. PORT AU PRINCE 913  
[1](#)B. PORT AU PRINCE 898  
[1](#)C. PORT AU PRINCE 793

PORT AU PR 00000954 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Haiti,s legislature is just getting down to the confirmation process for President Preval,s third nominee for Prime Minister, Michele Duvivier Pierre-Louis. In the first vote, which determines whether she fulfills constitutional eligibility requirements, the Senate appears ready to confirm. Many in the Chamber of Deputies, however, resent that President Preval did not, in their view, adequately consult with them before this nomination. Some in the lower house are objecting to aspects of the nominee,s private life. In agreement with the President, the nominee is saying little in public other than that she will submit to Parliament her dossier of citizenship and other personal documents to prove her constitutional eligibility. She confides privately she will get involved in negotiations over cabinet positions and policy only after she is confirmed. If she is, she will face a tough challenge to assemble a cabinet that is inclusive and cohesive, and then to get her cabinet and declaration of policy approved in a vote of confidence by both houses of Parliament. End Summary.

Parliamentary Validation Commissions Forming July 1  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) Over a week after President Preval nominated Michele Duvivier Pierre-Louis as his third candidate for Prime Minister (ref a), her confirmation process is just getting underway. The first step is a vote by both houses of the legislature on whether she meets constitutional requirements for Haitian citizenship by origin, and periods of residency and property ownership in Haiti. If she passes that hurdle, the PM nominee must then present a cabinet and a declaration of government policy to the legislature for a vote of confidence. Various Senators, including Senate President Kely Bastien, tell us that the Senate will convene a committee to examine her qualifications on July 1. Several Deputies reported to poloffs that the Chamber of Deputies will constitute its own committee July 1 or 3, and also consider other agenda items including the electoral law (ref

C). Post expects the Senate to vote before the Chamber, as the latter voted first in the previous PM vote, but this system of rotating between the houses is simply a courtesy and not a legislative rule.

Chamber of Deputies: No Decision Yet  
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13. (C) Deputies continue to emphasize privately the need for the next Prime Minister to work more closely with Parliament, including by steering government projects to members, districts, to assure that a significant portion of deputies are reelected. This, they argue, is imperative to strengthen the Parliament as an institution. Some continue to imply that such promises are a precondition for their supporting the PM-designate, either in the initial vote over her qualifications or in the vote of confidence in her cabinet and declaration of government policy. Several deputies have stressed to Emboffs and the Ambassador that Haitian voters are not accustomed to a parliamentary system. They view Parliament not as a body that passes legislation and counterbalances the executive, but as a development agency bringing projects and poverty relief to members, districts. Voters will support or reject candidates in the next election solely according to whether they have brought positive change for their constituents.

Feeling That Preval Failed To Adequately Consult Parliament  
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14. (C) Deputy F. Lucas Sainvil (Lespwa, Port-de-Paix, Northeast), coordinator of the 52-member Cooperative of Progressive Parliamentarians (CPP), which has become the majority bloc in the lower chamber (ref A), told Ambassador

PORT AU PR 00000954 002.2 OF 003

June 30 that in the previous two PM nominations, the Chamber had played its constitutional role and would do the same this time. However, he criticized President Preval for consulting only with the Presidents of both chambers of Parliament (Note: as is expressly required by the constitution. End note) but not more broadly with deputies and Senators in selecting Pierre-Louis. Broader consultations could have brought about prior agreement that this nominee was constitutionally qualified and had majority support in Parliament, thereby obviating much debate and a possible rejection. He lamented that while the CPP had requested such consultation with the President, Preval had met with them to discuss only generalities. They report having learned of the Pierre-Louis nomination only when it was announced on the radio. The view that President Preval should have consulted with the parliament more broadly over individual candidates is shared by many deputies outside the CPP, including Sorel Jacinthe (Fusion, Moron/Chambellan, Grand'Anse).

Senate: Senators Already Lobbying for Specific Policies  
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15. (C) Senate President Kely Bastien (Lespwa, North) told Ambassador June 30 he believed Pierre-Louis would clear the first state of confirmation in both chambers. However, he feared that confirming her cabinet and policy declaration would be a greater challenge. Unlike the vote on her constitutional eligibility, which required only a majority of sitting Senators (i.e., 9), the vote of confidence in the government required a majority of the 30 seats in the upper chamber, i.e., 16. With only 18 Senators currently in office, a defection of only 3 could doom a Pierre-Louis government. Certain Senators were already making policy demands. Senator Yourie Latortue (Artibonite en Action) was making a promise of re-establishing Haiti's army a condition of supporting her. Senators Bastien and Lambert (Lespwa, South) told the Ambassador they feared opposition to Pierre-Louis from Senator Edmond Supplice Beauzile, who might see the new PM as an obstacle to her own presidential ambitions. In any case, Senator Bastien told the Ambassador

he hopes for quick passage through both stages of the confirmation process, believing that a vote of confidence in the government could come as early as the weekend of July 14.

#### Pierre-Louis Not Counting Her Chickens

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¶6. (C) Pierre-Louis told the Ambassador June 29 that she is making plans for how to proceed if confirmed, but that she is by no means sure of confirmation. As of June 29, she had her documents in order but had not yet received an official request from either chamber of Parliament to present her dossier. She is developing a roadmap for her first hundred days, which includes a ''listening tour'' of the country to better ascertain the needs of Haiti's rural citizens. She said that as PM, she would push for true decentralization and immediate action toward delayed Senate elections (ref B). She also recognized the need for the Executive to mend fences with Parliament.

#### Minority Political Parties Staying Out of the Fray

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¶7. (C) Fusion Secretary General Serge Gilles told Poloff June 27 that Fusion is taking a non-committal stance on Pierre-Louis' candidacy. This comes after Fusion vocally supported both Ericq Pierre and Robert Manuel, with all 16 deputies in the Fusion block voting according to that decision. Gilles said Fusion is enthusiastic to work with Pierre-Louis should she become PM, and they hope to see a government in place as soon as possible. However, they will not risk political capital by declaring support Pierre-Louis now because they believe Preval must rally support for her, particularly within the ranks of Lespwa, the party that help get Preval elected. Gilles believes that tension between Preval and Lespwa is behind the downfall of the two previous PM candidates. OPL (Struggling People,s Organization), another party that supported both previous candidates, has

PORT AU PR 00000954 003.2 OF 003

also been less vocal in its support of Pierre-Louis, although its members were instructed to vote in her favor should her documents meet constitutional eligibility requirements.

#### Possible Fly in the Ointment: Candidate,s Private Life

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¶8. (SBU) Discussion is emerging among parliamentarians, in the Haitian press and internet blogs about the Prime Minister designate,s alleged homosexuality and her living with another woman. Senate President Bastien and Senator Lambert told the Ambassador this is becoming an issue, although neither predicted it would torpedo her candidacy. Certain deputies within the CPP have raised the issue by declaring that ''morality'' should be an issue in judging Michele Pierre-Louis, candidacy. The issue continues to simmer but is still far from dominating the public debate.

#### Comment: Whither Preval?

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¶10. (C) As in the case of the previous candidacies of Ericq Pierre and Robert Manuel, Preval is standing back and not lobbying parliament for Michele Pierre-Louis. He is, however, in intensive consultations with her on a daily basis. The President and his nominee are taking the position that the first vote is solely over constitutional eligibility. Pierre-Louis told the Ambassador she is ready to discuss policies and even cabinet positions with the parliament, but not until she passes the initial confirmation hurdle. Preval has yet to address lingering complaints from Lespwa that he is not lobbying for the support of his own party (ref D). In the lower chamber, deputies continue to see their vote for the PM through the prism of their own re-election chances and their resentment of Preval's

selecting PM candidates without consulting with the legislature beyond the presidents of the two chambers. Considering the first two failed candidacies, Pierre-Louis probably has about a 50/50 chance at confirmation. If she is confirmed, however, she is in for a tough battle with political parties, which will demand seats in the cabinet and positions in ministries, and with the parliament over her political platform.

SANDERSON